

XI. SERIES.

No. 1114.

THE
WATCH-CHAIN.



WRITTEN FOR THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION, AND
REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

PHILADELPHIA:
AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,
No. 146 CHESTNUT STREET.











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WATCH-CHAIN.

“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

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ENTERED according to Act of Congress, in the year 1833,
by PAUL BECK, Jr., Treasurer, in trust for the American
Sunday-school Union, in the Clerk's Office of the District
Court of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

NOTE.—The following story is designed to illustrate the principle of self-denial; and to show in what way even a child of tender years may do the will of God, and make his fellow creatures happy by the good works and alms-deeds which he does. Acts ix. 36.

THE
WATCH-CHAIN.

CHAPTER I.

ROBERT had always been at home under the care of his kind and pious father, who was the minister of a congregation in a small town in the country.

Boys sometimes think they shall be happier when they are away from home, at school, at college, or at a trade; but they almost always find that home is

the happiest and safest place in the world.

Robert was about ten years old. His habits and feelings were very proper, and his manners mild and kind ; so that the neighbours, and all others who knew him, loved him very much, and always spoke well of him.

We see how early in life a character is formed. We often hear it said of a man that he has a fair or good character, and perhaps we think that such a thing belongs only to a grown person ; but some boys have a good or bad character by the

time they are four or five years old. The people that live in the house with them; or those that come to the house very often; or the children who are with them at infant-school, know how they behave, and say of them, that they are kind, gentle, obedient, pleasant children, or that they are rude, cruel, disobedient, and ill-behaved.

Robert had a cousin who came to see him once every year. She was a very pleasant child, and Robert's mother often gave her something which she thought would please her. Some-

times she gave her a book, and sometimes a puzzle, and sometimes a toy. Once she gave her a beautiful watch-chain. It was made of steel, and polished so as to be very bright.

When they were together, the little girl showed Robert the chain which her aunt had just given her, and he was quite pleased with it, and thought it much more handsome than the silk cord which he wore round his own neck. For you must know that Robert's grandfather had given him a little watch, which he used to wear, and it

was fastened to the silk cord around his neck, so that it should not fall out, or be taken from him. And he thought the steel chain, which his cousin Martha had shown him, was much prettier.

But he said to himself, "It is very foolish for me to think so much about such a little thing. The cord around my neck is good enough. It keeps my watch as safely as a steel one would keep it; and if it only answers the purpose, it is no matter what it is made of. Besides, my wishing for a steel one so much, is

not only very foolish, but perhaps it comes from a wicked and discontented spirit, which must be very displeasing to God."

Now though our little friend Robert had these right and proper thoughts, his cousin's beautiful steel watch-chain would still come into his mind. He would think how it would look on his own neck, and how much prettier it would be than the black cord which he now wore; and then he would almost cry to think how unlikely it was that he would ever have such a beautiful chain.

CHAPTER II.

I MUST tell you that this little boy was not like many others of the same age, who have as much money as they want, and are always having presents besides ; but they are no better, nor wiser, or happier on that account. So far from it, they are often made very wicked, and very foolish, and very miserable, by nothing in the world but their money. It leads them into many sinful habits, such as pride and intemperance. It makes them vain and

fond of show, which is always foolish ; and they are very unhappy when they find that their money does not make wise people love or respect them half so much as they love and respect an industrious, honest, but poor farmer or mechanic.

Robert's father was not rich. He had all that he needed to make him and his family comfortable and happy, but he gave away all that he could spare, that it might do good to the souls and bodies of his fellow-men.

He early taught Robert that it was better to use our money in

feeding the poor, clothing the naked, comforting the sick and distressed, building a house for the widow and orphan, and above all, in giving every body a Bible to read, a kind and faithful minister to preach to them, and a good Sunday-school for their children to attend, than to spend it in cakes, and amusements, and fine clothes.

Sometimes Mr. Richards (for that was the name of Robert's father) was told by his neighbours that children must have such things, as long as they were children ; but Mr. Richards used

to say that he did not know that there was one rule for children and another for grown people ; and that for his part he had always thought that so far as children, even of two or three years old, could be made to know how to be kind and benevolent, he could see no reason why they should not have the enjoyment of being so. Robert, therefore, never had much at a time ; not more than a few cents, and never enough to buy such a watch-chain ; and he thought it would be wrong to tell his father how much he wanted it, for he knew

that his father was so very kind that he would even go without something himself that he might gratify his little son with whatever was proper for him to have.

This was very thoughtful in Robert. It showed his kind feelings. I fear there are very few children who would be unwilling to ask their parents to buy a toy, or indulge them in some other way, for fear it should cost them pain or trouble.

But, after all, Robert wanted the beautiful steel watch-chain; and though he was determined to say nothing about it, he thought

about it, and his looks and ways showed that he was disappointed, and wanted something which he had not got.

Robert's little trouble did not escape the eye of his kind mother. Children little know how watchful a mother is over all their thoughts and ways, nor how often she is the only person in the world who would follow them about with care and kindness, and give them comfort and relief in their times of sorrow and distress.

CHAPTER III.

ONE day when Robert and his mother and sisters were reading at the table, and his sisters were



talking about a new book which one of them had in her lap, Mrs.

Richards told Robert that he must tell her frankly what made him so sad. He then told her that he wanted such a watch-chain as that which his cousin had, but he begged her to say nothing about it to his father, lest it should give him some trouble. "You need not be afraid of that, my dear boy," said his mother, "for neither your father nor I shall feel at all troubled by your wish. We had intended to buy something for you in about a month, that would please you; for you have been careful to please us, and we have shown you our ap-

probation, though we know you do not want any such thing as a watch-chain to prove that we love you; and as to a reward for doing well, you always have that in your own bosom. But a chain like your cousin's you shall have, my dear Robert; so cheer up, and be diligent in your studies, and think no more about it till the chain comes."

Robert was made quite happy by his kind mother's promise. "I shall have the chain! I shall have the chain!" he would say to himself; "and, what is better, my parents will give it to me as a

mark of their approbation. I am sure I shall be very careful of it when I get it, and that will be in about a month."

This month seemed a tedious one to Robert, but at length the day came for him to have his present. His father called him into his study, and taking his hand, gave him a silver dollar, and said to him, "You know, my dear son, that money, like all other things, is the gift of God, and that he commands us to use that and all things to promote His glory. If we use our money for improper and trifling things,

it is as wicked as if we spent our time idly and unprofitably. In both cases we are unfaithful servants. Now you must judge what is right in the sight of God.



I give you this money to buy the watch-chain, or what else you please ; but I love you too well

not to remind you that it is wrong to indulge wishes of this kind, if we are prevented by it from doing any good to the souls or bodies of men. But go, my good boy; buy the chain if you think it best, and wear it as a token of the approbation of your affectionate parents."

The little fellow started off, with cheerful step, to a neighbouring village, and he ran so fast as to go by many people who were on their way to the same place. As he was passing through a field, which he thought would be a shorter way than by

the road, he saw two children sitting on the ground; near a fence, counting over some money, and talking to each other very earnestly.

“O, it is impossible to do it,” said one of them, “we have not got near enough.”—“O, I am sorry,” said the other, “our dear mother—what shall we do?”

This was all Robert heard as he passed on. But he could not forget it, and when he came almost to the road he stopped, and said to himself, “Now, perhaps, I have been led to come this way, so that I might hear what these

children were saying. I think I will go back, and ask them what has happened to them, and what they were saying about their poor mother."

This was a kind thought of Robert's, and we should always obey such thoughts. This is one of the ways which Jesus Christ takes to lead us in the path of duty. He makes kind and charitable feelings spring up in our hearts. He makes us think how we may do good to others, and he puts within us strong desires to do it, and the children of God are always ready and happy to

obey his will, in this and all other things.

“What is the matter with you?” said Robert to the children,



whom he found sitting and counting their money, just as they were before.

The boys looked much ashamed, and hung down their heads. At last one of them said,

“O, sir, only brother Frederick and myself wished to buy something, but we have not money enough to do it.”

“And what were you saying of your poor mother, as I went by?” said Robert.

To this question the children made no answer, but hung down their heads in silence. When Robert saw how they felt, he kindly sat down by the side of them, and asked them very affectionately whose mother it was

they were talking about. "Our own dear mother," said Frederick, telling her name, "and we wanted to buy a nice warm shawl for her, because she is old and ill, and very often cold."

Robert remembered that he had heard of a very pious woman of that name, but he never knew where she lived, nor did he ask.

"And have you not been able to save money enough to buy it?" asked Robert. "No," said Joseph, one of the little boys, "we have tried to save all we could, but we have not got enough." — "But how did you get what

you have there ?” asked Robert. “Why,” said Joseph, “we have tried every way. You see that great hill there.”—“Yes,” said



Robert, “where the carriage is just coming down.”—“Well,” continued Joseph, “Frederick

used to stand there to fasten the chain on the carriage-wheels, to keep them from turning, so that they shall not go too fast down the steep hill, and he got something for that; and he made the straw hat which he has on his head, while he was waiting there for the carriages to come. He got a few cents by going on errands, and I have tried to get something by making tinder and matches. We have not been idle, I am sure, nor spent any money foolishly, but we cannot get much by such things as I

have mentioned. We have got only ninety-eight cents."

"And how much more do you want?" said Robert.

"Why, as much again," said Frederick, "so that it seems as if we should have to give it up."

"As much again," said Robert, putting his hand in his pocket, and turning over the money which his father had given him.

"Yes," said Joseph, "exactly as much again, for the shopkeeper told us that such a shawl as we wanted would cost two dollars and fifty cents; but when we told him that we wanted it for

our sick mother, and that we had to earn the money ourselves to pay for it, he said we should have it for two dollars; and if we get within three or four cents of it, we can find some way of getting that."

"If we had a dollar and two cents," said Frederick, who had been listening to what was said, "it would be just enough."

Robert was all this time thinking what he ought to do. "Poor children!" said he to himself, "I am sorry for them. How happy would they be if—— but then I have so long wished for the

watch-chain, and father said I might have it, and gave me the money on purpose to buy it. But then the poor woman and her dutiful boys, how hard have they laboured to get what they have, and how much trouble to make their old mother comfortable.”

These were Robert's thoughts; and when he looked once more at the boys, his good feelings were so strong, that he took the silver dollar from his pocket, and put it into Joseph's hand, and generously said, “Take my dollar: you are welcome to it, and

go and buy the shawl for your mother."

Then he ran home as fast as he could, and did not wait for them to thank him, though they called after him till he was out of sight.

When he got home he did not look or feel so happy as he was when he went away ; for when he thought of what he had done, he felt rather sorry.

"Well, my dear, let me see your new watch-chain," said his mother, when he came into the house.

"I have not bought one," an-

swered Robert, looking down upon the floor.



“Then I suppose you bought something else you liked better,” said his mother.

“No, mother,” said Robert, “I have not bought any thing.”

“Then what do you mean to do with your money?” asked his mother.

“I have not got it,” said Robert.

“Not got it!” said his mother; “why, you have not lost that money, I hope?”

“No, mother,” replied Robert, “I have spent it, and I do not think I could have spent it better than I have done.”

He then told his mother all that had passed.

“Very well, my dear Robert,” said his good and pious mother, putting her arms around his

neck, and kissing him, “ I thank God that he has enabled you to deny yourself. Your father will be made quite happy when he hears what you have done. I hope we shall have many proofs that you love the Lord Jesus Christ, and try to imitate Him who ‘ went about doing good.’ You cannot, indeed, have the bright chain, but here is a silk one I made for you many months ago. Take it, my dear boy, and wear it ; and every time you put it on, remember the Holy Bible says, “ *He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord, and*

*that which he hath given. will
he pay him again.' And
'The Lord loveth a cheerful
giver.'"*

CHAPTER IV.

ROBERT'S father was much pleased when he was told of his little boy's generosity to the poor children whom he met ; and soon after he took him to visit a family living upon a mountain at some distance from the town ; for he thought the walk would please him, and he might learn something from all he should see. It took them about an hour to get there ; and when they arrived, they found a small house

standing all alone, and quite a comfortless looking place.



In the only room that was fit to live in, they found a woman, about forty years old, quite sick, and not able to move from the chair to the bed without help.

As soon as Mr. Richards went into the room, he took the hand of the sick woman, for he was a kind man and an affectionate minister. “Well, Margaret,” said he, for that was the sick woman’s name, “you are still suffering the pain and trouble of being sick, but I hope you find comfort in the thought that your heavenly Father is still kind, even when he sends pain and suffering upon you.”

“Yes, dear sir,” she replied, “I thank God he does not leave me alone. He puts his arms under me, and makes all my bed in my

sickness. I am rather better than I was last week, when you were kind enough to come and see me, and quite a pleasant thing has happened to me."

"Ah!" said Mr. Richards, "what is that?"—"Why, my dear boys," said she, "have been trying a great while to get me a nice, warm shawl; and last week they brought it home, and I have been quite comfortable with it. Before I had it I was cold. My wood was almost gone, and you see how old and broken our windows are; and when the wind blew hard I

thought I should almost freeze, till I got this charming shawl, which is almost large enough for a cloak.”

Robert shivered all over when he looked round, and saw what a cold room it was, and how uncomfortable the poor sick woman must be. “And where did your boys get such a nice shawl, and how did they get money enough to buy it?” said Mr. Richards. Robert touched his father’s elbow, as if to ask him if he would please not to speak of it, for he began to suspect that this might be the very mother of the two

boys to whom he had given the dollar ; but the sick woman went on to answer Mr. Richards' questions.

“ Why, a young gentleman met my two little boys,” said she, “ and gave them a silver dollar ! Yes, sir, a whole silver dollar ! because the poor children told him what they wanted to get for their mother, and that they had only half money enough to buy it. Ah, my dear sir, neither my children nor myself know who this kind friend was ; but every day, ever since the shawl was brought home, we have thanked God for

putting such a kind thought in his heart; and there has not been an hour, I am sure, since, that I have not prayed to God to bless him, and make him happy.”

Upon this Robert placed himself behind his father's chair, for the tears came as soon as he heard the sick woman's words; and he was afraid she would see him, and ask him what was the matter.

But just at that moment Frederick, one of the little boys, came in, with his arms full of sticks of wood, which he had been gathering for the fire; and having

bowed to Mr. Richards, and put down his wood, he stepped behind his mother's chair, and in-



stantly saw Robert, whose face he quickly remembered, and cried out, "O, mother, mother, have

you seen him! have you seen him!"

"Seen who, my child?" inquired his mother.

"Why, the kind little friend who gave us the dollar, for the shawl," said Frederick.

My readers can judge how Robert felt when the sick woman found out who he was. The tears flowed in streams as she thanked him over and over again, and the little boys joined with her in every expression of gratitude.

As Robert was returning home with his father, "I am sure, my

dear father," said he, "that the finest watch-chain in the world could never make me feel so happy as I feel now, to think that I have given so much comfort to the poor sick woman, and so much happiness to the two kind little boys. I do thank God that he put it into my heart to do what I did, and I hope I shall never forget how much a dollar is worth."

"Yes, my dear son," said Mr. Richards, "whenever you deny yourself for the sake of obeying the commands of God, you will feel peace and joy in your heart.

That is the way in which the Lord pays us for any work of mercy which he inclines our hearts to do, and which he gives us grace to do. You feel now that it is more blessed to give than to receive."

Whenever Robert put the silk cord round his neck after that, he always thought within himself, "How kind God was, to put it into my heart to pity those little boys," and he often prayed thus, "O, heavenly Father, teach me always to love my neighbour as myself, and to open my heart and hands for the good of the

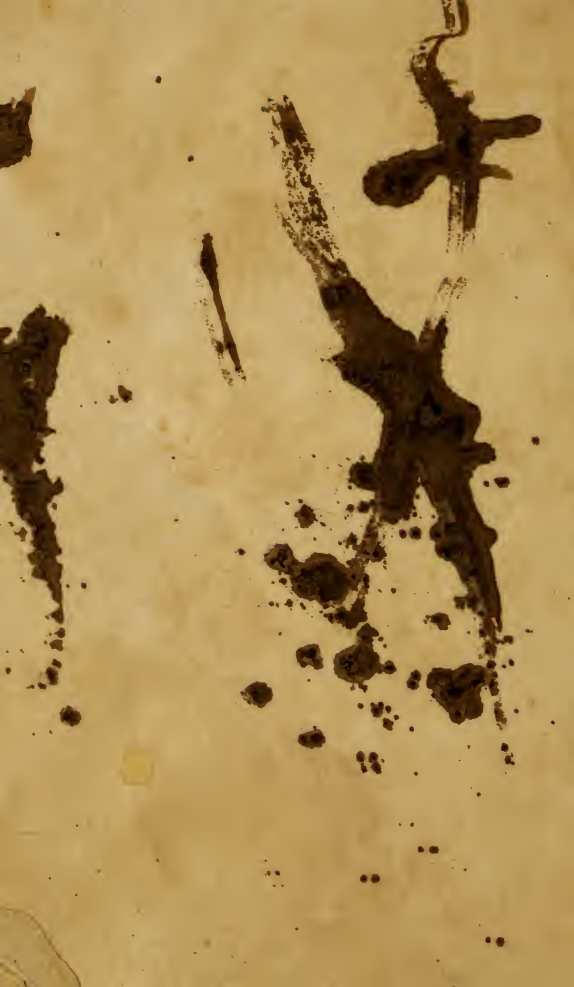
souls and bodies of all around
me.”

Teach me to feel another's wo,
To hide the faults I see ;
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.

THE END









PUBLICATIONS OF THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION.

ONE of the greatest improvements, witnessed in the present age, has been in the publication of books adapted to the condition, character, and capacities of the young. And of the works designed to enlighten, develope, and form their minds, awaken and cherish a taste for useful reading, and instruct them in morals and religion, the publications of the *American Sunday-School Union*, hold a distinguished place. Almost every report from a Sabbath-school, furnished with a library of these works, bears unequivocal testimony to their worth.

In the completion of these works every thing sectarian is excluded, and the truths of our common christianity are held before the youthful mind in living examples, which are contemplated with delight, while they silently produce the most salutary impressions. Their great excellence,—and this is a most important one—is, that the style in which they are written, the topics discussed and the characters presented, are, generally, well adapted both to excite and gratify the inquisitiveness of youth, to develope their mental powers, and furnish them with practical knowledge on the most interesting subjects.

We can not, in these general remarks, give that notice of different works which their respective merits may deserve; but we subjoin a list of titles of several that have recently appeared which we would be pleased to introduce to our youthful readers.—**YOUTHFUL MEMOIRS** is what its title imports, and inculcates by example the best sentiments.—**FAMILY CONVERSATIONS ON THE EVIDENCES OF REVELATION**, is an excellent book; all should have evidence of the truth of what they believe.—**LIFE OF LEGH RICHMOND**; every man and every child should read this book.—**AN ALARM TO UNCONVERTED SINNERS**, should be read by such as would enter the kingdom of heaven.—**THE LIFE OF COL. JAMES GARDINER**, is another picture of truth, or rather a joyful witness of its power, teaching by example.—**A MONUMENT OF PARENTAL AFFECTION**, and **A FATHER'S LETTERS TO HIS SON**, should be presented to children by their parents. To these we might add

FIRESIDE CONVERSATIONS ON SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE,—**A MEMOIR OF BARBARA EWING**,—**MEMOIRS OF ELIZA CUNNINGHAM**,—**FAMILIAR DIALOGUES**, and many of their earlier publications, which will amply reward the youthful reader for the money required to purchase them, and the time and attention he must give to know what they contain.—*Southern Religious Telegraph.*